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STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Taxation and Revenue Department

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Santa Teresa Couple Plead No Contest to Tax Evasion Charges Just Before Their Trial

Las Cruces – State Taxation and Revenue Secretary Rick Homans announced today that a Santa Teresa couple pleaded No Contest to tax evasion charges minutes before their criminal trial started.

David Eugene Landess and his wife Paula Kay Landess pleaded No Contest to felony tax evasion charges today before the jury selection into their trial began in front of Third Judicial Judge Fernando Macias.

“We have zero tolerance for individuals and businesses who evade paying their fair share of taxes,” said Secretary Homans. “This case should send a strong message that we will aggressively pursue tax evaders and use every available tool at our disposal to bring these criminals to justice.”

David Landess, 62, and Paula Landess, 55, both pleaded no contest to two counts each of attempts to evade or defeat their New Mexico personal income taxes for the tax years 2003 and 2004. The state agreed to dismiss conspiracy charges included in the Grand Jury indictment.

David Landess is employed by Gardner Turfgrass as Farm Manager in Santa Teresa. He filed documents with his employer stating that he was “exempt” from withholding. The Landesses also failed to file New Mexico personal tax returns since 2000.

Judge Macias deferred final sentencing for 12 months. He placed the Landesses on probation and required them to file all required tax returns within 90 days in addition to complying with the standard probation requirements.

This case was the result of an investigation by the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department's Tax Fraud Investigations Division. The case was prosecuted by the office of the Third Judicial District Attorney, Susana Martinez.

To report suspected tax fraud against the State of New Mexico, contact the Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-866-457-6789.

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